

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING**

July 28, 2009

A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on July 28, 2009 pursuant to notice at the Rhode Island Convention Center Boardroom, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

Board members present were Committee Chairman, Dale Venturini, Commissioners Dave Duffy, Patrick Butler, Letitia Carter and Jason Fowler.

Also in attendance were Jim McCarvill, Kim Keough and Betty Sullivan, RICCA; Tim Muldoon, John McGinn, Amanda Marzullo, Arlene Oliva and Nancy Beauchamp, RICC; John Gibbons and Kristen Adamo, PWCVB; Larry Lepore, Robert Cappalli, Jodi Duclos. Lisa Coelho and Lisa D'Ercole, DDC; Patti Neves, VMA; Evan Smith, Newport CVB; Tom Crocker, Sportservice; Mark Brodner, RIEDC; Monica Bunton, interested party and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.

Ms. Venturini called the meeting to order at 12:30 PM. Ms. Venturini asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the June meeting. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Duffy and seconded by Ms. Carter it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the minutes of the June meeting.

VMA

Ms. Venturini stated that Mr. Habl was unable to attend today's meeting because the VMA is hosting the Chamber of Commerce's Business after Hours event this evening. Ms. Venturini noted that Patti Neves would be representing the VMA. She asked Ms. Neves to address the Committee first in order for her to get back to the building and assist Mr. Habl with the event. Ms. Neves thanked everyone that donated to tonight's event. Ms. Neves reported that dates are being held for John Prine and Handle & Hayden Society/Beethoven. Ms. Neves noted that there is an issue with Handle & Hayden because the VMA lost its status as a 501c3 Corporation. Mr. McCarvill informed Ms. Neves that the VMAF is still in existence and their 501c3 status could be used for not for profit fundraising. Mr. McCarvill said that he would discuss solutions to the issue with Ms. Neves and Mr. Habl when there was sufficient time. Ms. Neves reported that several shows went on sale on July 27th. She said that this was a soft sell with no advertising except for the PPAC Mailers and e-mail blast. Ms. Neves stated that tickets for Hal Holbrook and Celtic Sojourn are selling fairly well. Ms. Carter asked if the theater is using a different rate structure for profit and not for profit performances. Ms. Neves said that to date everything that has been booked is for profit. She stated that there is a different rate for

not for profit. Ms. Carter asked how things are going with the Gospel Show. Ms. Neves reported that things are moving along. Ms. Neves noted that the VMA is doing a great deal of outreach in the community. Mr. Gibbons said that there is an opportunity for a significant event with a major artist in November. Ms. Neves noted that there is nothing official and that she did not want to speculate on the event at this time. Ms. Venturini thanked Ms. Neves for her time and wished the VMA great success with the Chamber.

Ms. Venturini asked Jeremy Crisp to address the Committee. Mr. Crisp distributed the wire frame to give the Committee an idea of how the web site would work. Ms. Keough noted that the name Rhode Island Convention and Entertainment Complex (RICEC) seems to be the one that works best. Discussions ensued regarding the design of the site and the reason behind the new name. Ms. Keough stated that we need an umbrella to place over the venues and bring them together in one site. Mr. Duffy asked why a link for SMG is included on our site. Ms. Keough reported that when you click on the SMG button you will get background information on SMG at the facilities and not be connected to their corporate web site. Ms. Venturini asked if we would still be the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority. Ms. Keough answered that we would. Ms. Venturini asked if we should change. Mr. Duffy said that we will discuss it in the future and that a name change would likely need legislation. Ms. Venturini asked if a vote by the Board is required for this name. Mr. Duffy said that it did not because RICEC would be the marketing

name and would not change the Authority. Ms. Venturini noted that she has a conflict for the scheduled September Marketing Committee meeting. She said that the Committee would meet on September 29th at 12:30. Ms. Venturini reported that the web site should be ready for launching at that time.

CONVENTION CENTER

Ms. Venturini asked Mr. McGinn to address the Committee. Mr. McGinn presented the Convention Center's progress in meeting the goals of the 2009 Marketing Plan. Mr. McGinn stated that the Convention Center had missed their goal by \$700,000 which was disappointing but not unexpected given what has happened with the economy. Mr. McGinn reported on several new prospects for tradeshow and conventions. He said that space is being held for the Agway Dealers Network for June 2010 and a contract was sent to the GI Joe Collectors Group for May 2010. Mr. McGinn noted that a final price is being negotiated with Sysco Boston for March 2010. Mr. McGinn said that new prospects for meetings include a Reebok meeting that would be a large short term booking for September 2009.

Mr. McGinn reported that MF Athletics and Headliners 2010 National Dance Competition is interested in returning to the Convention Center after a four year absence. Mr. McGinn said that the sales team is working hard to secure a Frito-Lay Recruitment Event, the 2010 Annual New England Energy Conference, a Joint Football Clinic – Big East Conference, Taking Control of Your Diabetes and the Mary Kay

Career Conference. Mr. McGinn reported that contracts have been signed with Adidas Group, RI Parent Information Network and the NESO Annual Meeting. Mr. Duffy said that he understood that Bayside was re-opening. Mr. McGinn said that Bayside is re-opening but that the Bay Colony Dog Show will be held at the Convention Center.

DUNKIN' DONUTS CENTER

Ms. Venturini reported that Ms. Cohen was not able to attend the meeting. She noted that Ms. Cohen's husband was reportedly recuperating well following his surgery in New York. Mr. Cappalli represented the Dunkin' Donuts Center. Mr. Cappalli reported that Spirit of America has been doing a lot of advertising and should be a success. Mr. Cappalli noted that he was not a marketing person but the staff was available if the Committee had any questions. Mr. Cappalli reported that TSO would be performing two shows and the Boston Pops would be back after an absence of several years. Mr. Cappalli said that the NCAA Regional Tournament would be held in March and that the staff is working with Providence College on a package for the party suites. Mr. McCarvill noted that meetings have taken place with Providence College and that they are willing to give the box office tickets to sell earlier and more often than in the past. Ms. Venturini asked how we had done with Cirque du Soleil. Mr. Lepore said that it was great. Mr. Duffy noted that the review was not good on opening night. Mr. Lepore stated that the rigging was not

correct and the performers were concerned about safety. Mr. Cappalli said that they will be back in two years. Ms. Carter commented that some people had problems with the confetti. Mr. Lepore said that our ventilation system should have taken care of any issues because of confetti.

PROVIDENCE/WARWICK CVB

Ms. Kristen Adamo and Mr. John Gibbons represented the PWCVB. Ms. Adamo reported on sales activity for the month of June. Ms. Adamo also presented the booking highlights for the month. Ms. Adamo and Mr. Gibbons reviewed the tentative or prospective bookings that are being negotiated. Mr. Gibbons reported that several site inspections had occurred. He noted that the American Choral Directors Association had toured the VMA and the Convention Center as well as area churches and hotels. He said that this group would be a perfect fit for the VMA. Mr. Gibbons said that the Association of Applied Sports Psychology has finalized their contract with the Westin and it should be signed soon. The American Society of Bioemchanics has selected the Convention Center for their conference in August 2010. Mr. Gibbons reported that the CVB team had made sales calls in Washington, DC Providence, Philadelphia and Hartford and attended trade shows in Chicago, Cape Cod and Boston. Mr. Gibbons noted that the CVB is prospecting off peak meetings, conferences and events for the Complex. He said that the religious and fraternal markets show some promise of utilizing the Convention

Center or the Dunk during the Summer months when the buildings are historically quiet. Ms. Adamo reported on web site activity. Ms. Adamo noted that usage of the web site has increased dramatically over last year. She said that for the month of June user sessions were up 56.4% over last year. Ms. Adamo highlighted the CVB marketing activity for the month and things that are scheduled for the next few weeks.

RIEDC

Mr. Brodier reminded the Committee that Rhode Island had received the only 5 Diamond Resort Destination award in the country. Mr. Brodier reported that Rhode Island Tourism will host the Discover New England conference in Newport. Mr. Brodier stated that web site usage is up 38% over the previous year. He noted that culinary events seem to be the most popular. Mr. Brodier reported that the Welcome Center has become very important for the one tank and staycation traveler. The Welcome Center has internet access to assist in finding daily events, hotel rooms, driving directions, etc. Mr. Brodier noted that the tourism web site is a great source of information on what is going on and the many education programs being offered. Mr. Duffy asked how RI Tourism had fared with the budget cuts. Ms. Venturini said that she senses that what we do is not appreciated. Mr. Brodier stated that he had not yet received his official budget. Mr. Brodier reported that the Governor is supportive of tourism and understands that tourism generates many jobs and a

great deal of income for the state.

NEWPORT CVB

Evan Smith reported that 80% of the Newport CVB funds are received between May and September and the rainy weather has not helped the tourism industry. Mr. Smith reported that the John L. Loeb Center at the Touro Synagogue is opening on Sunday. Mr. Smith noted that Touro Synagogue was the first Synagogue in America. Mr. Smith encouraged everyone to visit the Loeb Center where they could read a letter written by George Washington. Mr. Smith reported that twenty corporate meeting planners are due in Newport this week. He also noted that Newport will be hosting several sailing regattas and that a record number of cruise ships are expected. Mr. Fowler asked about room rates in the City. Mr. Smith stated that there has been a 23% correction in rates. Mr. Fowler asked what year the rates compare to. Mr. Smith answered 2002 but noted that a correction was called for.

Ms. Venturini asked if there was any other business. Hearing none she asked for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Butler and seconded by Mr. Fowler it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 1:55 pm